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BYRD'S DOGS

SLEDGING IN THE ANTARCTIC

BY

JOHN S. O'BRIEN





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BYRD'S DOGS

SLEDGING AT THE SOUTH POLE
IN PICTURE STRIP

By

JOHN S. O'BRIEN

SURVEYOR WITH
THE BYRD ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION

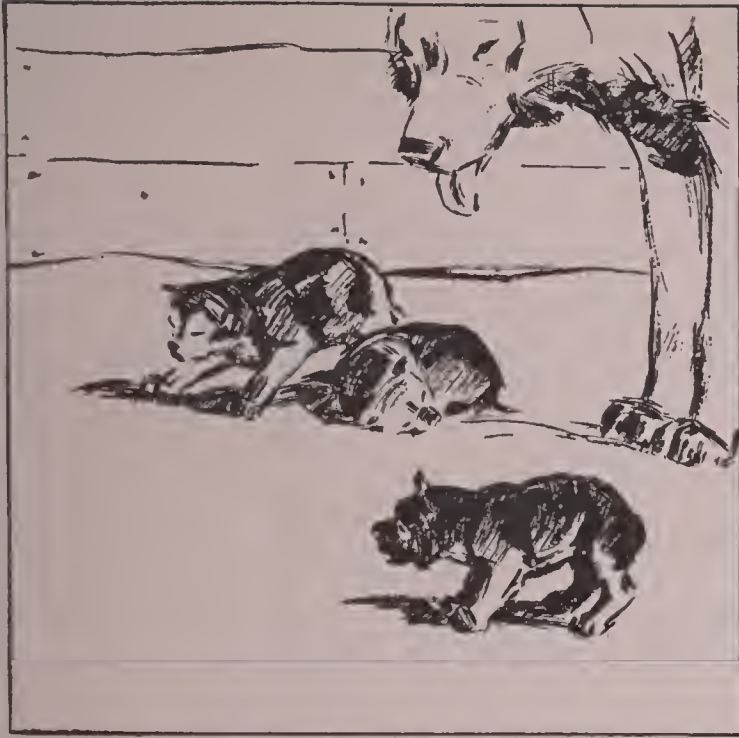
with drawings by

BEN STAHL

THOMAS S. ROCKWELL COMPANY

CHICAGO, 1931

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Playful Puppies Are

The puppies were born in tunnels under the hard snow in Little America. About twenty-five of them were born there.

The men used to feed them powdered milk and water until they were old enough to eat seal meat like the older dogs.

A dozen puppies would gather around one piece of meat and try to tear it to pieces. It was frozen hard and stiff.



Born in Little America

When they were a month old, the mother dogs would take them outside the tunnels, but the light frightened them.

They would rush back into the dark, and the mother would sit there and whine and cry for them to come out.

In two or three days they would get used to the light and would romp and play together no matter how cold it was.



Puppies Are Trained

When the puppies were five months old, the men started to train them by hitching them to a sledge with an older dog.

The lead dog would be disgusted with the puppies, because they pulled in every direction, or else sat down and slid along.

Others would start fighting with the dogs next to them, and in a moment all the dogs would be in a pile, snapping and biting.



to be Sledge Dogs

When the men went into the tunnels to feed them, there would be a wave of puppies, twenty or thirty of them trying to play.

If a man put down a glove, or anything else, it was gone in a moment, for the puppies would chew up anything they found.

When some of them saw stones for the first time, they spent hours trying to eat them, for they had been used to eating everything.



Josephine—A Mother Dog

Josephine had a kennel above the snow before the long winter set in at Little America. The kennel had no door.

One night a storm came, and snow began to drift into her kennel and fill it. Josephine was afraid her puppies would smother.

She moved them back into the kennel, but the snow drifted higher and higher around the poor little puppies.



that Knew What She Wanted

Josephine dashed into one of the camp buildings, and the men saw her run all around the room barking and sniffing.

She took a big piece of paper in her mouth and dragged it outdoors, and the men followed her to see what she wanted.

At her kennel they found out that she wanted to use it to keep the snow from covering up her little puppies.



Lady—Afraid of Men—Hid

Lady was afraid of men, for early in her life she had been badly treated and beaten for every mistake she made.

For weeks she would not let anyone come near her, and the men had to coax her and play with her for hours to make friends.

When her puppies were born, she used to carry them to a different tunnel every day. Even the puppies were afraid of men.



Her Puppies Every Day

When the men went to feed the dogs, Lady would meet them and lead them to the place where she had hidden the little puppies.

Finally she made friends with the men, and the puppies became just as playful and full of tricks as the rest of the dogs.

One of Lady's puppies was Al, who was one of the smartest of all the dogs born there in Little America.



Igloo, Admiral Byrd's Terrier,

Igloo was a fox terrier that belonged to Admiral Richard E. Byrd. He was five years old when he reached Little America.

Igloo's fur was not long enough to keep him warm in the bitter cold; so the tailor made him a little parka.

Igloo wore the parka very proudly as he accompanied the Admiral about Little America, and it kept him quite warm.



Wears a Little Parka

The sledge dog puppies that grew up in Little America soon started to drag Igloo about by seizing hold of the parka.

The puppies were only a few months old, but they were so much larger than Igloo that he could not stop them.

He was so ashamed that he did not want to wear the parka, and when it was brought out, he would hide his head in a corner.

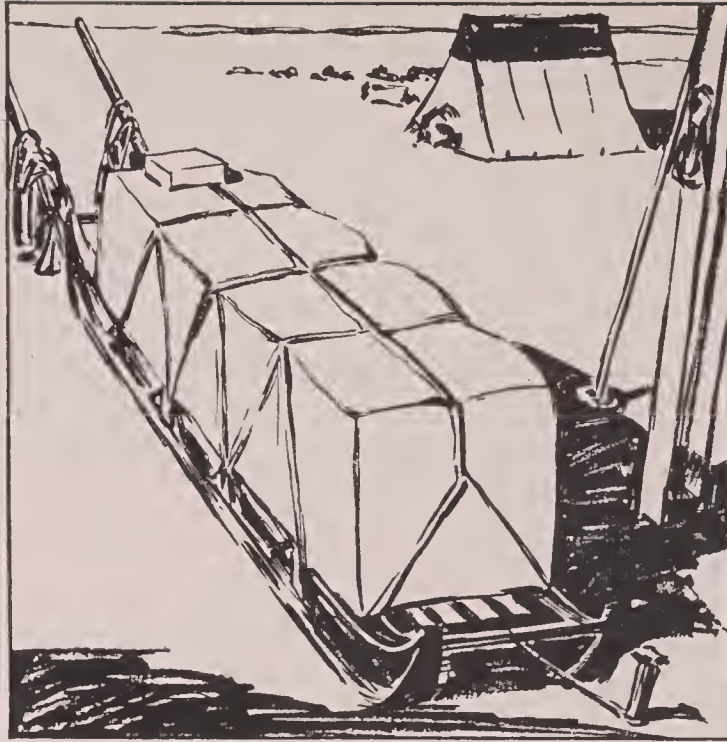


Strong Dog Teams

Each sledge was pulled by nine dogs. The lead dog went ahead of the others, and was the smartest one of all.

He was hitched to a long rope that was fastened to the sledge. He wore a harness of leather around his body.

The other dogs were fastened to this rope in pairs, each with his own harness, and each had a short line at his collar.



Pull the Heavy Sledges

The lead dog was always put in harness first, because he was so anxious to start that he pulled on the rope and kept it tight.

The men had to keep the sledge fastened down until ready to start, or else the dogs would run away with it at once.

When the last pair had been put into the traces and the sledge unfastened, the dogs started off with a rush, barking loudly.

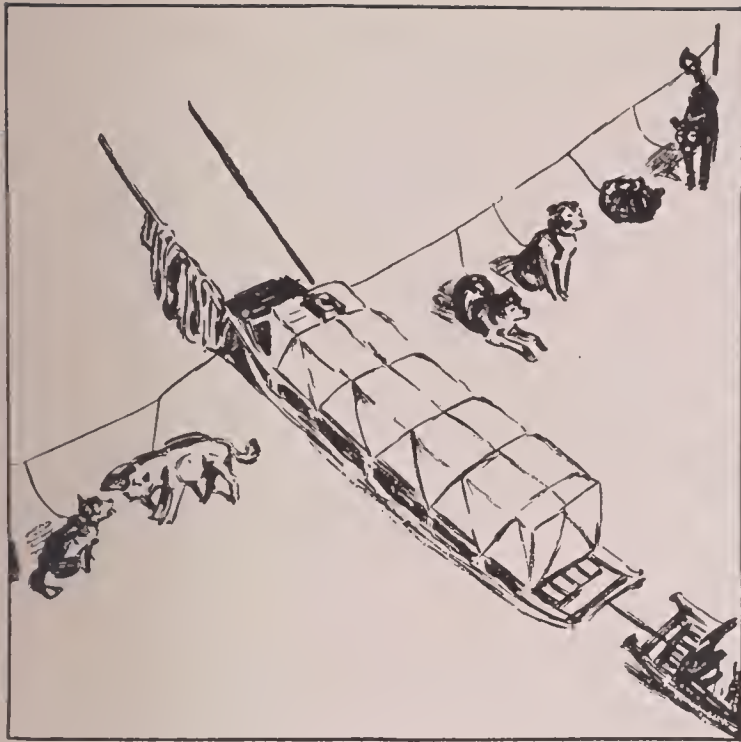


Sledge Dogs Work Hard

After the dogs had run a mile or two as fast as they could go, they would settle down and work hard all day long.

Each sledge carried over a thousand pounds of food and supplies; so the dogs had to pull steadily all morning.

At noon the men had lunch. The dogs were not fed, but they had time to rest or play while the men were eating.



While Out on the Trail

At night the dogs' harnesses were taken off, and the dogs were chained to a wire fastened to each side of the sledge.

As soon as they were chained, the men fed them their dinner. They would eat the pemmican greedily and look for more.

Sometimes they would try to steal the food of another dog, but each one watched his own food so they could not fight.



Dinty—the Best Leader—Sulks

Dinty was the best of the sledge dogs, and on the long trip to the mountains he was the leader and worked hard.

One day he began to be sulky and did not do his share of the work. He would run first to one side and then the other.

The men wondered what was the matter with Dinty, for they knew he was not sick and that his eyes were all right.

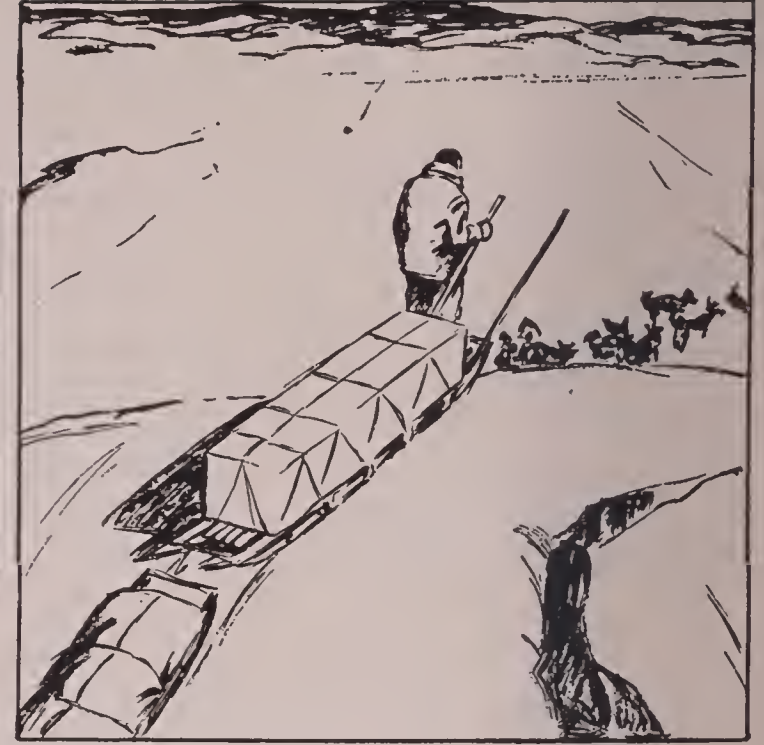
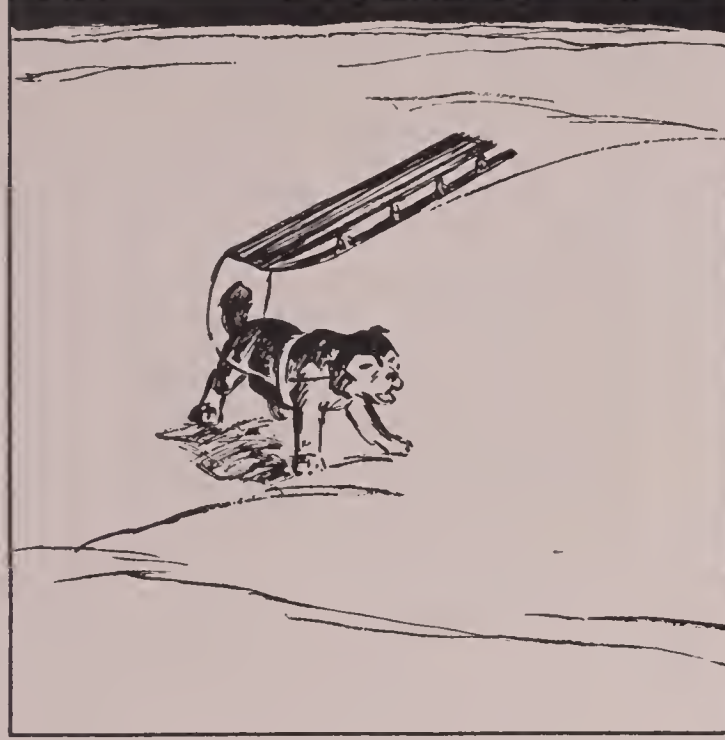


and Loses His Place

To cure him of being sulky and lazy, the men put another dog in as leader and hitched Dinty to the sledge with the others.

This did not cure Dinty, for he would not work, but just trotted along with the rest and let the others do the pulling.

Each morning he would watch the new leader put in his place and then would put his head down on his paws and refuse to move.



Al—a Brown and White Puppy

Al was one of Lady's five babies, and was born in one of the dark tunnels in the snow at Little America. He was brown and white.

The men harnessed him to a tiny sledge and let him play with it so he could see what his work would be like when he grew up.

He was so smart and worked so hard that he was taken on the long trip to the mountains when he was only eight months old.



that Did a Dog's Work

He was made leader of the team when Dinty became sulky, but he could not pull the sledge straight like the other leaders.

He soon learned that the orange flags marked the trail and when he saw one, he would race for it as straight as he could go.

Al never was tired, and when the other dogs were too tired to eat, he would want to jump around and play with the men.



Dinty—Again in His Place—

Dinty had been very proud of being the lead dog, but when another dog had his place, his feelings were hurt.

On the last day of the long trip, the men thought Dinty had learned his lesson; so they decided to let him be leader again.

That morning Dinty watched the dogs being put into the harness, but the driver first hitched the dogs nearest the sledge.



Leads His Team Home

When the last pair was hitched up and the leader's place was still empty, Dinty knew that he was to be leader again.

He jumped up and barked, tried to pull up the chain that fastened him, and showed that he knew just what was going to happen.

When he was harnessed in the lead, he was as happy as a dog could be and pulled hard all the way back to Little America.



Tickle—Black Lead Dog—

Tickle was a beautiful black lead dog that hurt his shoulder and could not take his place at the head of his team.

The men took off his harness and let him follow the rest of the dogs. He would limp into camp long after the others.

Each day he came in later and later, and one morning when the dogs were hitched up, he had not even been seen.



Limps Back All by Himself

When the men returned to camp, one of them put on his skis and decided to look for Tickle at a place where food had been hidden.

There was Tickle waiting, for he had the good sense to stay where there was food, and he was overjoyed to see his master.

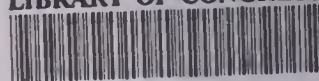
Knowing that he had not been forgotten, Tickle was encouraged to limp on to camp, where with food and rest he was soon well.





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